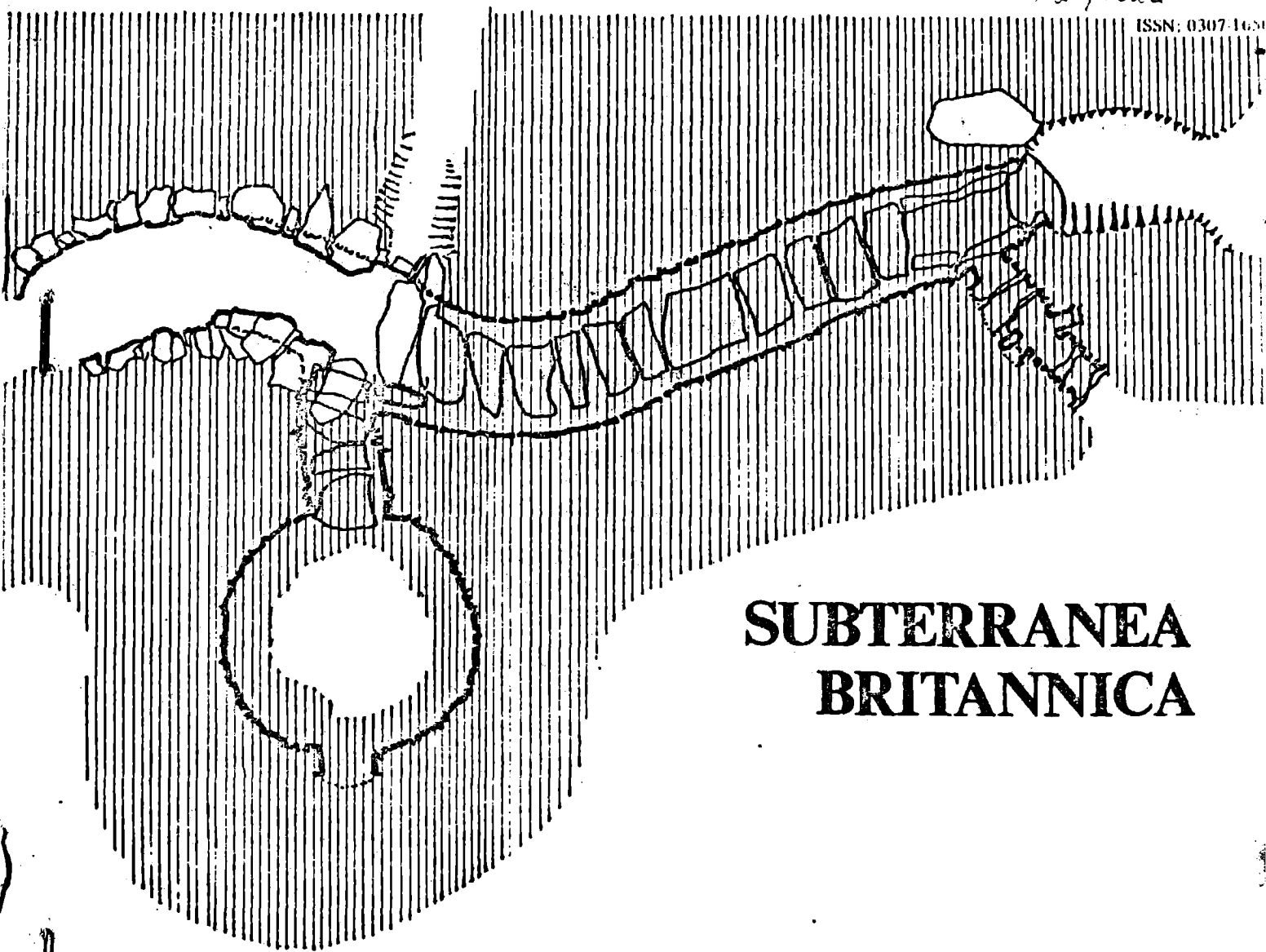


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ISSN: 0307-1630



SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA

Bulletin No. 4

*Compiled and published by
Subterranea Britannica
and printed by SPRINT of Royston, Herts*

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EDITORIAL

We are just about to celebrate our second birthday, and membership continues to grow slowly but surely which is a healthy sign.

You will see from the separate paper included with this issue that the Conference to set up a Federation of Societies to Investigate Underground man-made Structures is to be held on Saturday, 23rd October at the Institute of Archaeology, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. We do hope that those of you who belong to other Societies will be able to attend as a representative and hold voting rights from your particular Society, and that our own members who are interested will come along as observers to support our national endeavour.

If you are coming to the annual September Day Conference, an early reply would be appreciated so that adequate catering arrangements can be made.

Sylvia P. Beamon
Editor.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE WINTER DAY CONFERENCE

On January, 10th 1976 at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, members had the opportunity of listening once again to Mr. Julian Watson, Local History Librarian of the London Borough of Greenwich, who on this occasion informed us of the extensive conduit system under Greenwich. (See page 9).

Before lunch Dr. R. Mercer from Edinburgh University gave a very informative and entertaining account of the methodology of excavating at Grimes Graves, where of course, a group of members had visited the previous spring. After lunch Dr. Mercer continued to expand on the subject by giving details of the finds from the site.

Members had been requested to give short papers for discussion, but due to shortage of time not all were able to be read. Mr. N. Bristow and Mr. R. Webster of the Pendragon Society, Bristol explained that they were experimenting with resistivity recording techniques and were able to plumb much lower depths, upto 40 - 50 ft. with reasonable accuracy and even as low as 70 ft. They were hoping to locate 'Arthur's Cave' under Cadbury Hill. There were anomalies in their survey of this site and they thought possibly they had found a hollow. A heap of sand had been found at one side of the hill, and it was considered that this might have been spoil from the cavern. That passages, souterrains etc. can be located by instruments of the nature mentioned above, and can detect lower depths than just features close to the surface, is naturally of great interest to us.

EXCURSION TO NOTTINGHAM CAVES

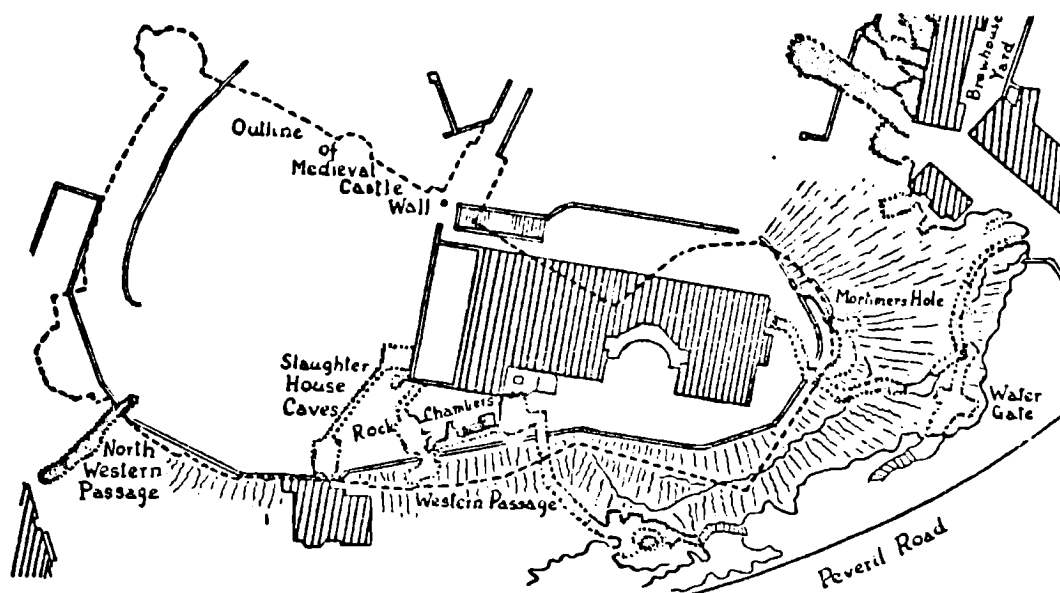
The May excursion to visit the Caves of Nottingham was well attended and thanks are due to Alan MacCormick who gave us a fascinating tour.

Beneath the Crown Insurance Co. building we were shown a storage area, which from archaeological material is thought to be c. 1250, and also a malt,

possibly contemporary, and a well with water still remaining in it. We continued to the Salutation Inn, a small pub with large cellars, and one interesting feature here, was a flight of steps cut in the sandstone which led downwards to nowhere - perhaps the excavators had been seeking water. Some members spent lunch at the Inn whilst others ate sandwiches in the attractive Castle grounds as it was a fine, sunny warm day.

At 2 p.m. we assembled to begin examining the extensive system of passages which exist under the Castle with alcoves and passages running off the main thoroughfare, some have yet to be fully explored. Mortimer's Hole (named after Roger Mortimer, the usurper of the crown of Edward II and who would not relinquish his hold to the young king Edward III) was a steep passage from outside the walls of the Castle into the Castle itself, and used in the capture of Mortimer by Edward III's party of men in 1330.

We proceeded to the underground tannery at Drury Hill, then onto Brewhouse Yard where behind the facade of houses built c.1750 are rooms cut in the rock. This area is being renovated to become a folk museum. Nearby are stables with mangers still inset in the caves. A few surviving caves exist, which had been technically outside the county of Nottingham and overlooked then the meadows down to the river beyond. These caves had housed undesirables and vagabonds and most were destroyed to oust them.



Ground plan of the present building showing the existing passages and caves in the face of the rock

This plan is taken from the booklet The History and Development of Nottingham Castle, p. 14, written and illustrated by Ian Forrester Roberts.

ANSTEY - THE CASTLE AND CAVE GATE (PART II) - A FOLKLORE TALE

In Anstey parish by the side of the high road which leads to Barkway and Cambridge, is an ancient chalk pit, one face of which had been so long disused that no-one living can say when chalk was last dug from it. On the eastern face of the pit, hidden by earth and rubbish tradition maintained that the sometime entrance to a subterranean passage existed. About this once open cavern a legend is woven in connection with the untimely fate of the local fiddler. Published at the same time as the archaeological report in the Trans. of the East Herts. Arch. Soc. Vol. II, 1902-4 was an article entitled "The Anstey Fiddler: A Legend of Cave Gate" written by W. B. Gerish. The information below is largely quoted from this item.

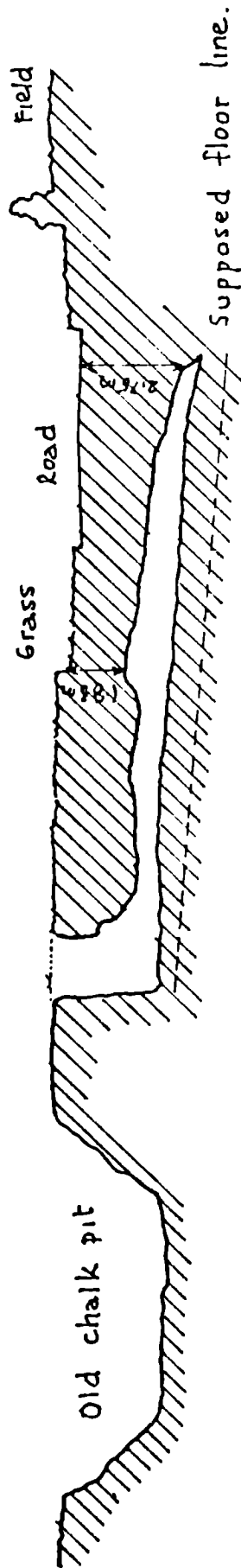
At the time of the incident to be related, thought to have occurred considerably before 1800, the cave possessed a very unenviable reputation. It had never been entered by even the boldest, and the general belief was that anyone venturing within would never emerge alive. It was supposed to communicate with the Castle by a long and almost straight passage (the castle mounds are situated nearly a mile to the east).

The spot although more generally known as Cave Gate had a more sinister appellation assigned by certain bolder spirits, who averred that it was one of the entrances to the abode of 'his satanic majesty'. One evening, in the early autumn after work for the day was over, the labourers were spending an hour or two at the Chequers enjoying the twilight rest and the music from blind George's fiddle. After a while the conversation turned, as it had often turned before, upon the subject of the cave, and while there were two or three who 'didn't believe there was nothing in't,' the majority agreed 'twas a place to be avoided by anyone who was not a saint.' This implication was rather resented by blind George, whose morals were by no means of the best, and who had become both quarrelsome and pot valiant. Throwing his fiddle onto the bench he swore that blind as he was, accompanied by none, and with only his dog and fiddle he would venture that very night to the uttermost end of the passage.

Of course, there were those not wanting to dissuade him from his foolhardy enterprise but the majority dared him to venture. George's mind, however, was made up and with his fiddle under his arm and guided by his dog, accompanied by those present, he made his way in the growing darkness to the pit. Arriving at the spot, his companions hesitated by the fiddler pushed his way past them and reaching the cave mouth, then nearly hidden by branches and undergrowth, he shouted for assistance to clear a way through. With considerable reluctance two or three of the younger men went to his help and trampled down the briars, urging him all the while not to be so foolish.

George in a fury turned upon them, cursing and swearing, declaring that he would explore the passage, 'although the devil himself were at the end of it.' He shouted to the people to follow him above the ground to the other end, guided by the sound of the fiddle. And then he disappeared in the black darkness of the cave, dragging with him, in spite of its whines and cries, his little cur. Men and women, boys and girls rushed back to the road and listened intently for the sound of the fiddle and then a low weird strain came from beneath their feet. With bated breath and scarce a whisper, they followed the sound across the stubble and ploughed lands until they were nearly half way to the Castle Hill. Then all at once the fiddling ceased, stopping with a shrill shriek which some likened to a dying scream. For several minutes they listened intently, and then they all rushed back to the cave mouth. There, all was still but after a few moments a faint noise was heard and suddenly the fiddler's dog appeared tailless, and with every atom of its hair singed off. On seeing the crowd, with a howl it dashed up the opposite side of the pit and disappeared in the darkness, never more, like his master to be beheld by mortal eyes.

ANSTEY - HERTS



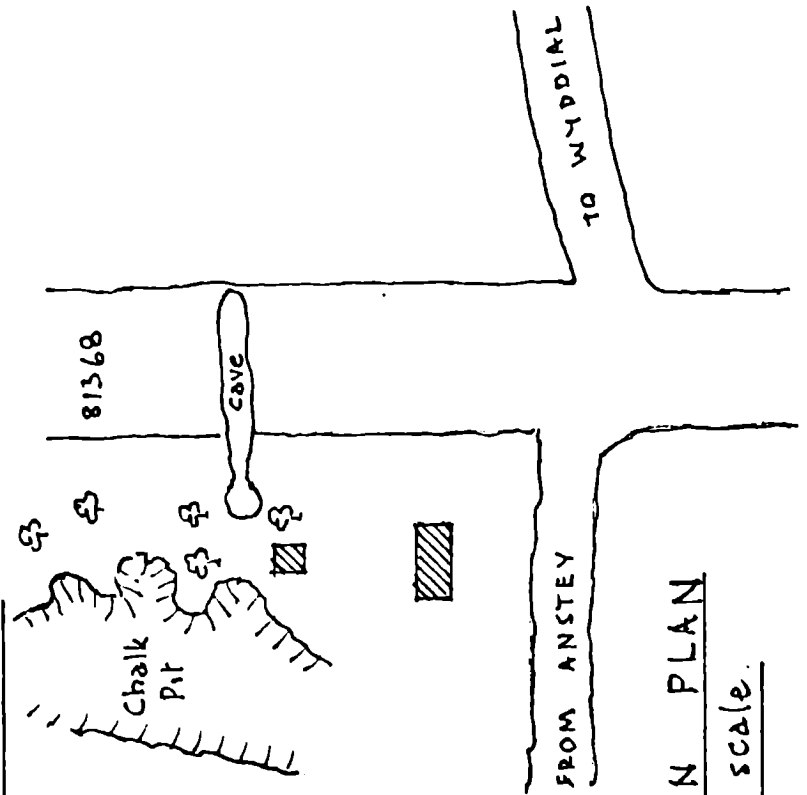
LONG^{TDL} SECTION

Scale 1:200 m.

Note.

3.05 m deep shaft of 1.83 m diameter to entrance door. Tunnel about 2.13 m wide & 19.82 m long cast towards Castle 1.5 Km - 1 mile. approx.

CTB '76.

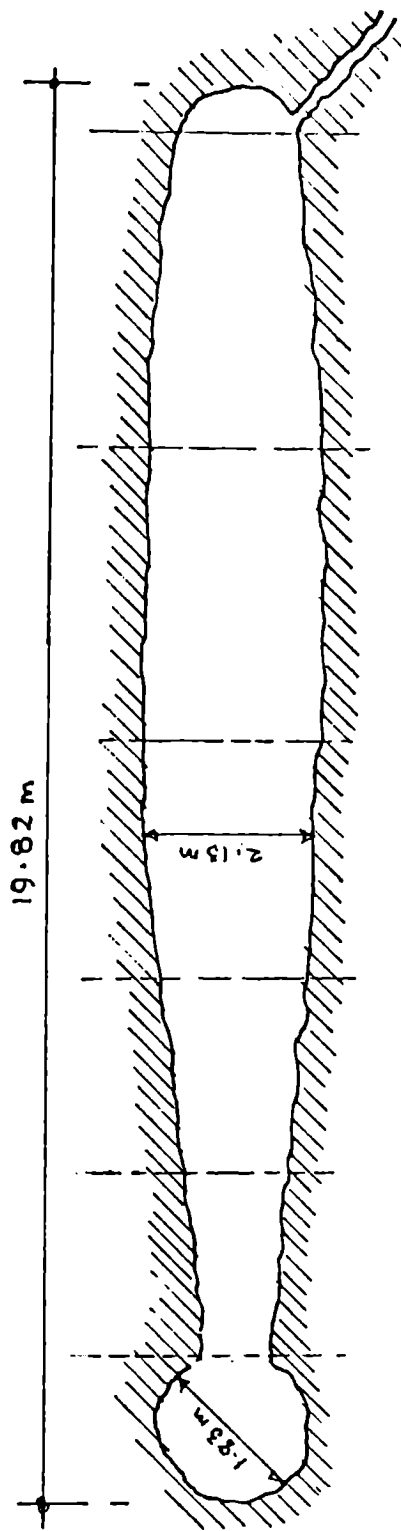


LOCATION PLAN

Not to scale.

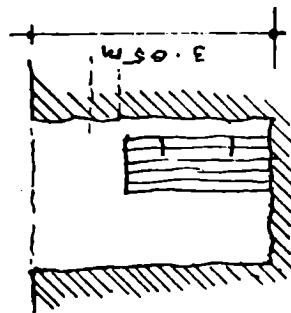
ANSLEY - HERTS.

Plans copied from the originals of W. R. Kemsley's c. 1965.



PLAN

Scale 1:100 m



Elevation
of entrance



Supposed
Floor line.

SECTIONS

CTB '76.

SOME COMMENTS ON WELL CONSTRUCTION IN WARWICK

Warwick stands on a bluff of Keuper sandstone 50 feet (15.05m) above the river Avon, dominating an important river crossing whilst also occupying an easily defended position. Water was supplied to the town by the many wells sunk into the sandstone. Many are of the usual cylindrical form, stone lined with a construction trench behind (fig. 1). One unusual form is, however, worthy of special note and is discussed below.

A bottle-shaped, rock-cut chamber with a second shaft in its floor (fig. 2) was discovered during excavations at Swan Street, Warwick, in 1972. It was bricked over and only the lower part of the second shaft was filled with deposits. For safety reasons excavation was impossible, and the well has since been filled with concrete and shops built over it. Only two parallels for this structure have been found, both in Warwick.

The first parallel was noticed during building work at 5 - 7 Jury Street in 1958. Unfortunately, detailed recording was not carried out but it seems that this example had been filled in and a complete 14th century pitcher was found in this material.

The second parallel was uncovered during archaeological investigations in Brook Street in 1968, but has not yet been fully published. A bell-shaped rock-cut chamber approximately 24 feet (7.32 m.) deep was excavated and found to contain 12th century pottery and skeletons of cats and chickens. The chamber had no second shaft, but the floor was damp and covered by a silty layer. It was suggested that the feature was a well which had fallen into disuse because of a lowering of the water table and had been filled in. It would seem likely that the Swan Street well was a similar case but instead of abandoning the well, a second shaft was added to ensure a water supply by tapping the new, lower water table. The original bottom must have made a suitable working platform for the second period of well digging.

The advantages of originally having a bottle-shaped chamber are quite clear. A well, if used frequently, reduces the water in the rock nearby and forms a cone of exhaustion. This means that the amount of water obtained every day from a normal cylindrical well, unless driven deep into the water-bearing strata, can be quite limited. The bottle shape, however, enables a wider area to be tapped for water, especially at the point where impervious layers of clay are to be found in the sandstone. This well type can therefore be seen as a local adaptation of well construction to ensure adequate supplies of water for the town during the medieval period.

The discovery of 14th century pottery in the fill of one example, and 12th century material in another, suggests that the bottle-shaped wells went out of use and were filled in over a considerable period. Whether they were also constructed for several centuries is much more difficult to discover. The earliest phase of occupation so far located in Warwick is of the 11th century and the Brook Street example, if ever used, could well be of that date. Careful observation of building work may locate further examples of this interesting well form.

H. C. Mytum.

Should anyone know of the existence of wells of this construction in other areas of the country, will they please write in. Editor.

Fig. 1. Normal cylindrical well with stone lining and construction trench behind. Scale 1 : 40.

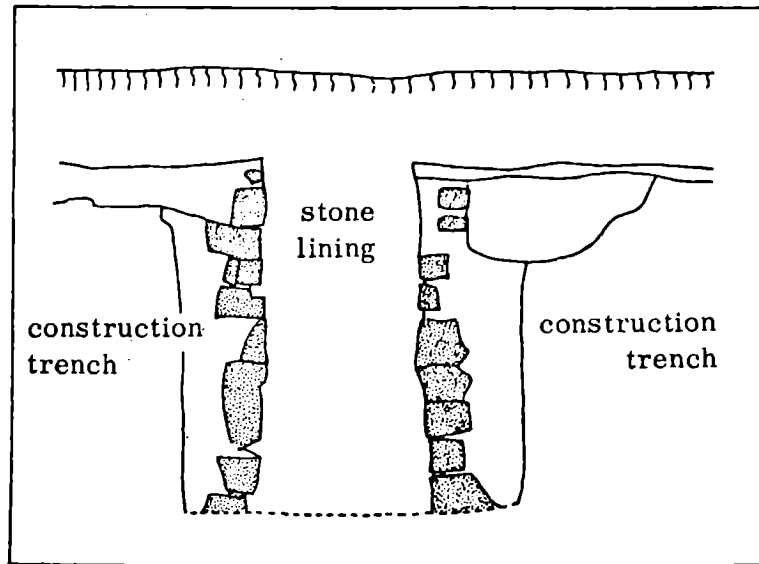
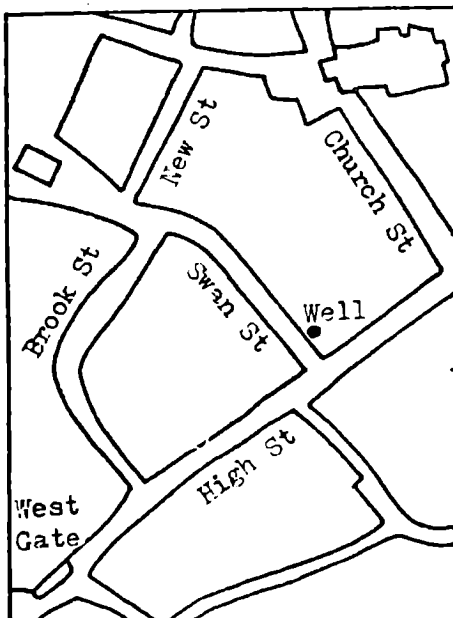
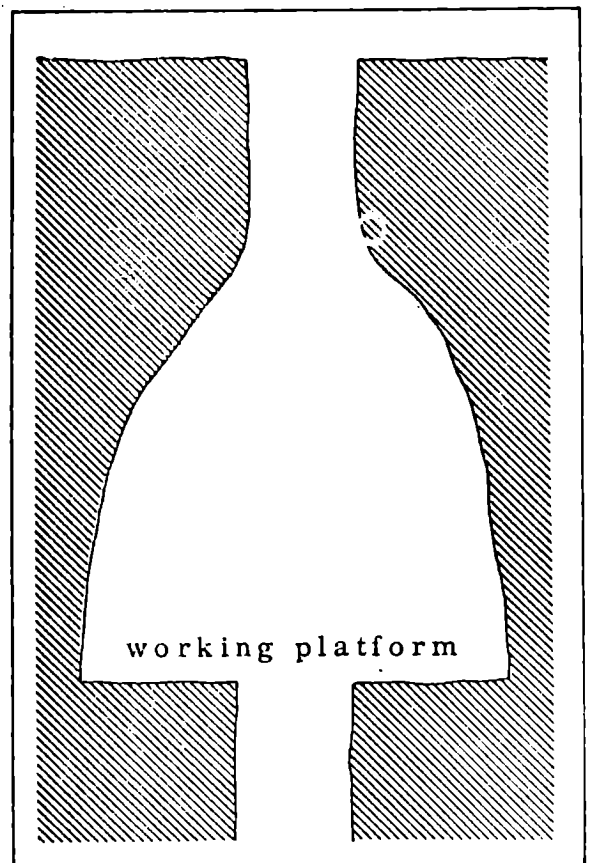


Fig. 2 Bottle-shaped well from Swan Street, Warwick. Old bottom used as working platform for digging of second shaft. Scale 1 : 80.



Map showing position of well.
Map Ref: SP 2815 6485



THE GREENWICH CONDUITS

The extensive underground conduit system in Greenwich has long been the source of legend and myth although its origins, purpose and extent are well documented. It has been said that the tunnels connect with Chiselhurst Caves many miles away, that they supplied water to an, as yet undiscovered, Roman city or, more flamboyantly, that Henry VIII designed them as escape tunnels with sharp corners to prevent arrows being fired at his fleeing person.

These conduits have, since at least the thirteenth century, supplied water to the principal houses on the banks of the Thames in Greenwich, drawing water from springs on the high plateau of Blackheath. In manorial accounts of 1268 a reference occurs to the maintenance of aqueducts and a grant of Henry VI in 1434 gives to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester permission to construct an aqueduct between his new house on the riverside and "a certain fount called the Stockwell". The house built by Duke Humphrey reverted to the Crown at his death and, subsequently, a new palace was built on the site by Henry VII, supplied with water by an enlarged conduit system. In 1695 a commission was appointed to survey the Royal Manor of Greenwich prior to the establishment, on the site of the Tudor palace, of the Royal Hospital for Seamen. In the course of this survey the conduits were examined with a view to re-using them to supply the new buildings with water. Of the eight known tunnels only one could not be found, the Arundell conduit which was possibly medieval. On the completion of the Royal Hospital the conduits were restored and enlarged and directed into two collecting reservoirs. Those on the west side of the Park drain into the Standard reservoir, an attractive brick building which still stands. Those on the east lead to a cistern situated in part of a building now used as the vicarage of the Parish Church. From here the water was channelled to wherever it was needed. Further surveys were made in 1780 and 1905 but, unfortunately, no plans were drawn.

The interior of the biggest, the Hyde Vale conduit, is well documented. In 1905 it was described as a "well constructed brick passage-way about six feet high and some three feet wide (1.83 m. x 90 cm.), with a brick floor carrying four inch (10 cm.) water pipes right and left. This conduit follows a very serpentine route... the reason for the bends is that, outside of the Royal property of Greenwich Park, the tunnels followed public ways rather than infringe private property rights..." In the 1950's Harry Pearman of the Chelsea Speleological Society examined the tunnels and describes them thus "the bottom three courses of bricks have regular gaps to draw in water from the gravel. There is plenty of water still flowing though polluted with detergent. At intervals are small dams which pond the water and trap sediment and here one wades deep".

The tunnels and at least five of the conduit heads still survive although some sections are now inaccessible. They no longer provide water for the Royal Hospital for Seamen, now the Royal Naval College, but still fulfil their important secondary function as land drains without which the low, northern part of Greenwich Park would become an unpleasant mire.

Julian Watson
Local History Librarian
London Borough of Greenwich.

The accompanying map is from the Samuel Travers Survey of the Royal Manor of Greenwich - 1695.



THE TUNNEL AT OLD SARUM

In 1795, following a severe frost and thaw, a tunnel was discovered at the Wiltshire hill-fort Old Sarum. Its discovery was reported in the Gentleman's Magazine (Vol.LXV, pp. 95 and 193 - 4), as follows:-

Old Sarum. February 2nd (1795). Letter to Mr. Urban from Viator:-

Apropos; a subterraneous passage has lately been discovered within the limits of the ancient City of Old Sarum. The late severe frosts, and sudden inundations which succeeded, by pressing more strongly than usual upon the slight surface that covered the mouth of the entrance, have opened a passage under the ramparts in the north-east quarter, near the supposed site of one of the ancient towers. By a doorway of near four feet (1.22 m.) in width, a part of the square stone columns of which remain in a perfect state, a spacious covered way is entered. of about seven feet (2.13 m.) in breadth, and from eight to ten feet, (2.43 m. - 3.4 m.) or more, in height, with a circular or saxon roof, evidently artificial. It has been found to descend in an angle nearly parallel to the glacis of the surrounding ditch, to the distance of one hundred and fourteen feet (33.47 m.); but the loose chalk from above, which has rolled down and choked up the bottom, at present prevents any further progress. It was probably designed as a passage to the foss and outworks. (p.95).

February 10th (1795) Letter to Mr. Urban:-

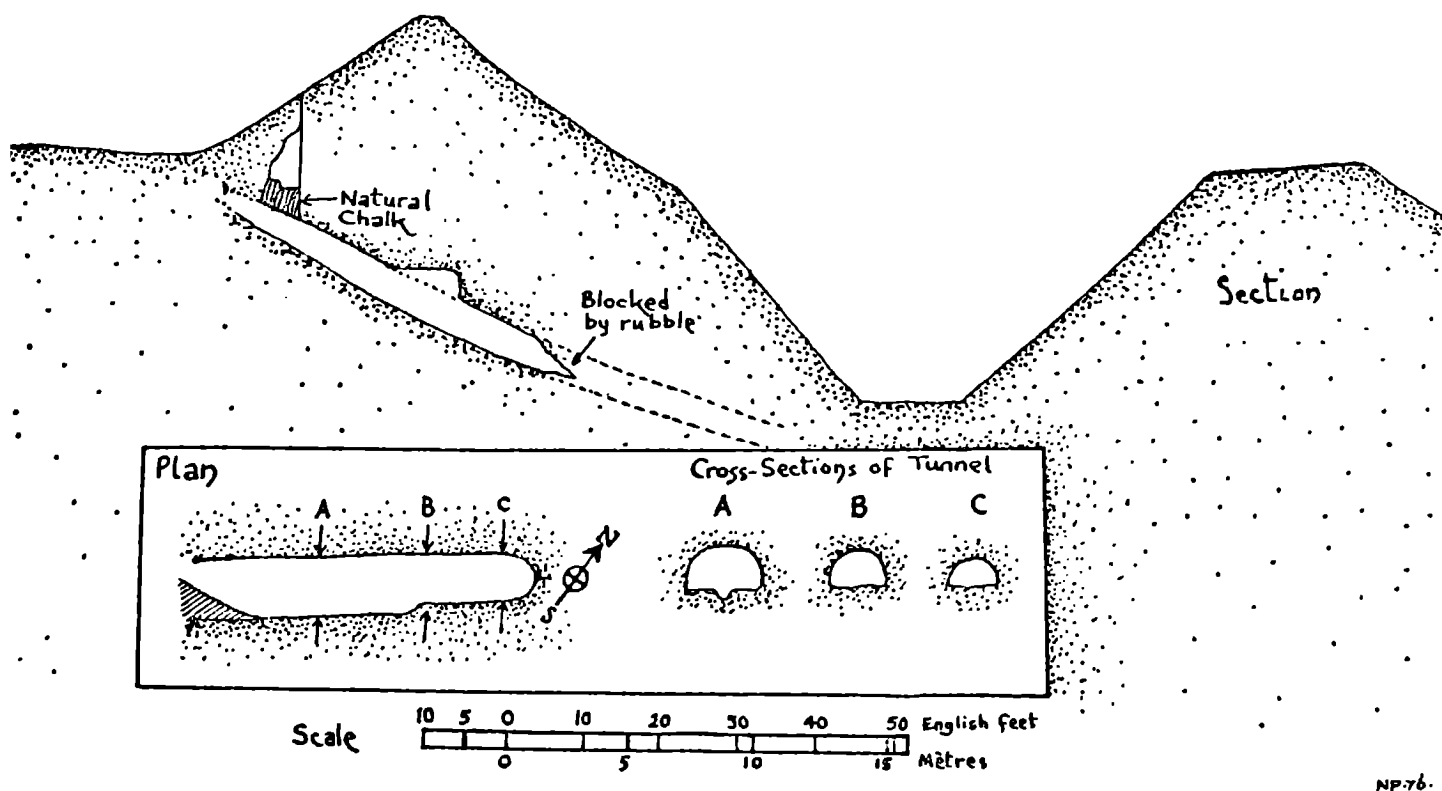
It will no doubt excite your curiosity when I inform you that a subterraneous passage has been discovered at Old Sarum. Some persons of Salisbury on Saturday last went to the upper verge of the fortification (the citadel) and on the right hand, after they had reached the summit, discovered a large hole. They got a candle and lantern, and went down a flight of steps for more than 30 yards (27.06 m.).... the marks of a chisel.. are visible on the side. There are two pillars at the entrance which appear to have had a door at foot. (p.193)

It is all now filled up by order of farmer Whitchurch.... who.... thinks curiosity would bring so many people there as to tread down his grass, whenever grass shall be there. I went into it 30 yards (27.06m.) which was as far as I could get for the rubbish.... whether it was Roman or a Norman work is difficult to say; but it certainly was intended as a private way to go into or out of the castle. (p.194).

In 1796, a Mr. Ogden re-opened the tunnel recently sealed by farmer Whitchurch reporting that the steps were fresh-cut, unused. In 1957, an excavation of part of Old Sarum was undertaken (Excavation as at Old Sarum, 1957: P. A. Rahtz & J. W. G. Musty; Wilts. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Mag. 1960; 353-367), during which the tunnel entrance was unearthed. A trench was cut through a large (56 x 48 feet) hollow on the eastern radial bank, revealing the tunnel, at the entrance of which was much debris including 18th and 19th century clay pipes, probably relics of sightseers from the 1795 opening.

When opened in 1957, the steps seen previously were found to be covered to a depth of several feet by a chalk scree. The excavators were only able to penetrate the tunnel to a distance of 52 feet (15.66 m.), the tunnel being blocked by chalk scree at that point. The scree was believed to have arisen partly by weathering, deliberate dumping and nineteenth-century ploughing.

Old Sarum Ramparts & Tunnel



The tunnel is between 7 and 8 feet (2.13 m. & 2.43 m.) in width, with a flattened semi-circular roof. Marks found on the roof and sides of the tunnel show it to have been dressed by a tool $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (1.5 cm.) wide, possibly a mason's twybill, after being hewn with coarser tools. In pitch and direction, the tunnel is irregular. The north-west side is almost straight from the mouth to the choked end, but the south-east side is irregular, wider near the mouth, narrowing abruptly 35 feet (7.68 m.) from the entrance. At the widest point was found a considerable roof fall. Graffiti dated from 1795 to 1822 is in evidence, the entrance apparently being sealed in 1822 or soon after.

No finds were made in a position to ascertain the date of construction of the tunnel, but it is believed to be medieval. In 1796, it was suggested by Ogden that it was either a sally-port, a private entrance, or steps leading to a well or dungeon. Rahtz and Musty believed that the first two suggestions were the most likely, and the possibility that, if the 1795 report of unworn steps was true, the tunnel was not regularly used, was uncompleted, or went out of use soon after its completion.

The tunnel was subsequently re-sealed, as resources were not available to excavate the filled portions, and it was considered too expensive to keep it open for visitors. An iron plate was put across the entrance, and the soil was replaced, and so it has remained since 1957.

Nigel Pennick

Ireland is rich in monuments of many kinds and probably possesses more souterrains than any other West European state. The recording of Irish souterrains has been taking place since the eighteenth century but, with few exceptions, County lists are not available and, where such exist, they are invariably inadequate. At present it is not possible even to offer an accurate estimate of the numbers of souterrains in Ireland although there are certainly thousands. The largest groups can be found in the south-west, in Cork and Kerry; in the west, in Clare and Galway; in the north-east, in Antrim and Down and in the east, in Louth, Meath and Westmeath. Smaller groups are recorded in the north-west in Donegal, Mayo and Sligo. Kilkenny, Limerick and Waterford have still smaller groups as do the remaining coastal counties while only a tiny number occur in the land-locked centre of the country. As in other 'souterrain areas' the distribution is predominantly coastal and riverine.

Large numbers of Irish souterrains are contained within raths and a smaller number associated with open dwelling sites. Although a large majority are reported as being isolated structures it seems probable that this is more often due to inadequate reporting than to fact.

As might be expected in a country where so many souterrains are known, many variations in plan can be seen. A majority of Irish souterrains are of dry-masonry construction although part rock-cut or clay-cut examples are known and are particularly common in the south-west e.g. the site at Lisheen (County Cork) where three primary sink-holes were drilled into the clay and a series of interconnecting creeps tunnelled inwards from these led to a succession of chambers. Many Irish souterrains comprise of simple passages or passages with chambers, but some regional variation can be seen. In the north-east they often consist of a series of rectangular chambers connected by narrow creeps e.g. Aird (County Antrim) or of long, easily negotiable passages leading to a spacious rectangular cross-passage that forms the chamber e.g. Ardglass (County Down). In eastern Ireland souterrain chambers are commonly of beehive form e.g. Gorteen (County Westmeath) and are generally approached by constricted passages, while in Galway rectangular chambers connected by similarly low, narrow passages are the norm e.g. Ballinderry. All parts of Ireland can provide some examples of souterrains that show an extraordinary complexity of plan. The souterrain at Parkmore, County Clare is reported as having two rectangular chambers connected by creeps with a 'port-hole' in the roof of the inner chamber giving access to a third chamber at a higher level, and similarly-constructed souterrains are known from elsewhere in the country. Another feature of some Irish souterrains is the presence of obstacles which impede progress along the passages. At Liscom Fort (County Galway) several such impediments can be found. The first chamber of this souterrain is c. 7 m. long, 2 m. wide and 2 m. high with three steps at its end leading to a barrier 0.53 m. high with a 0.71 m. gap between its top and the souterrain roof. On the opposite side of the barrier is a 'well' sunk into the floor of the structure to a depth of 0.81 m. and with a length of 0.64 m. and a width of 0.91 m. The only way round this drop is via an alcove set in the side wall of the creep passage in which it is contained, the alcove being 0.86 m. high, 0.84 m. wide and continuing for a distance of 1 m. Past the 'well' is a constricted creep leading to a second chamber. A barrier, without the added difficulty of a 'well', also exists between Chambers II and III.

The dating of Irish souterrains remains a vexed question. Several sites in the south have produced examples of late Bronze Age metalwork but in no instance is the association unambiguous. At Cush, County Limerick, the

excavator believed that one of the souterrains, in ring fort No. 5, had been disturbed by a Late Bronze Age burial after it had fallen into disuse but his interpretation has generally been rejected by later writers. Some of the firmest dating for the construction of any Irish souterrains comes from those examples which contain inbuilt ogham stones e.g. Underhill (County Cork) which cannot pre-date the 6th century A.D. and souterrains that are firmly connected with other dated structures, such as those at Knowth (County Meath) which form an integral part of the Early Christian settlement there. At the later end of the timescale, there are hints, particularly from some north-eastern sites that individual souterrains were in use as late as the 10th century A.D. and perhaps later.

In a brief note of this kind it is now feasible to dwell on the function of souterrains, a topic which has long been a source of controversy and which is worthy of a considerable paper in its own right. Souterrains were built over a long period of time and were undoubtedly constructed for a variety of purposes, but despite the plausible arguments advanced against the theory, this writer adheres to the view that souterrains were largely intended as places of refuge, both for people and possessions, although many were used for storage and some were certainly built for this purpose.

Most Irish souterrains have been discovered by accident rather than as a result of planned fieldwork, and even in recent years there has been a marked lack of excavations as opposed to superficial examination of the immediately accessible features of such sites with the result that we know a great deal about their overall plans and still less about any stratified deposits they might contain. This problem is not confined to Irish souterrains and seems to stem from the fact that souterrains have acquired the reputation of being unrewarding sites to excavate. Until a co-ordinated programme of intensive fieldwork and selective excavation is introduced the many unanswered questions that bedevil the study of souterrains are likely to remain unanswerable.

Shelagh Lewis, B.Phil., M.A.,
Department of Ethnology,
The University Museum,
Manchester.

⁺ This note is based on an M.A. thesis submitted at the University of Liverpool on the subject The Souterrains of Britain and Ireland. This contains a greatly expanded text, indices and full supporting references.

MINING IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

We have received a letter from the General Secretary of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society Ltd., and one of our own members, who is personally interested in the history of mining in S. E. England, especially for building stone, but also for chalk, sand, fullers earth etc. He would like to establish contact and exchange notes with anyone working on the history of English building stone mines - whether the larger and more important ones at Portland or Box, or the smaller ones such as Beer, in Devon. The address to write to is:-

Paul W. Sowan, Esq., B.Sc., F.R.G.S., F.G.S., F.L.S.,
96a Brighton Road,
South Croydon, Surrey CR2 6AD.

Caves in Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham.

During late 1975 and 1976 members of Nottingham Historical Arts Society directed by Mrs. C. M. Lockett cleared and surveyed two cave systems and a number of medieval cess pits under nos. 48-52 Bridlesmith Gate.

Bridlesmith Gate lies in the old city of Nottingham, just outside the Saxo-Danish Burh defences but well within the Norman-French Borough. The underlying rock as elsewhere within the medieval city defences is Bunter sandstone. The name Bridlesmith Gate is Danish in origin, 'gate' being a street. Until the 18th/19th centuries timbered buildings lined Bridlesmith Gate, but only three survived into the 20th century. One, Barkers Coffee House (no. 54) is adjacent to the property under discussion and was built about 1600. Caves exist under all the properties investigated in this street with the exception so far of Barkers.

The presence of caves under nos. 48-52 Bridlesmith Gate has been known for many years but they were inadequately recorded. Nottingham Historical Arts Society decided to investigate when it was learnt that the site was threatened by office development. One cave system (A) already known was cleared of rubbish and planned. Three caves and an annexe under 58-50 Bridlesmith Gate led to further caves (now blocked) under Marks and Spencers' Pepper Street car park adjoining. Under no. 48 Bridlesmith Gate an oval pit was roughly dug in the cave floor c. 1.5cm. deep, perhaps an unfinished malt kiln, but no evidence for its use was found. In the 18th century this was built over by brick wine bins.

(B) System (under nos. 50-52) Bridlesmith Gate was entered through a cellar wall under the street, then by steps to a small cave with stone thralls. From this cave a second, round one 6 m. deep opened to the south (adjoining Barker's Coffee House). Uniquely, this was approached by a rock cut stair spiralling round the right hand cave wall. The purpose of such a small deep cave is unknown. Dating again is almost impossible. The fill was late 19th century but two graffiti with dates of 1800 and 1801 on the top entrance and a carved cross lower in the passage indicate an 18th century date at the latest.

Behind nos. 48 and 50, a row of three medieval cesspits and a well were datable from c. 1200 to perhaps 1300-1350 by stratified finds of pottery and Venetian glass vessels.

Alan MacCormick,
Nottingham Castle Museum.

(cont'd from page 4) The villagers had had enough of horrors and ran helter skelter to their houses. Early next morning most of the village went again to the cave mouth but there was no sign of George. After some consultation they decided to fasten up the entrance to the cave at once, and fetched spades, then with mortar, flint and rubble the entrance was soon blocked up.

For many years the villagers would not venture to this place after dark. Mr. Gerish thinks the fate of the fiddler was a fall of chalk and the loss of hair on the dog a later embellishment to give a touch of sulphurous realism to the story

From the Church Registers it is known that at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, Anstey had a fiddler whose name was George, whether he was blind or not is not known, but this person was buried in the Churchyard (Williams, p.26), however, Mr. Kemsley, who followed up the story a decade ago and surveyed the cave shortly before his death, estimated the date of the event as having occurred about 1750 or earlier.

Sylvia P. Beamon.

BOOK REVIEW

The Cambridgeshire Coprolite Mining Rush by Richard Grove, The Oleander Press of Cambridge - Price £1.20.

This little book is the first comprehensive account ever published of the Cambridgeshire mining rush for coprolites which also extended into Bedfordshire and for a period was extensively exported to Europe and elsewhere from the Ports of Kings Lynn and Ipswich.

Coprolite is, according to the definition in the Oxford English Dictionary, "a stony roundish fossil consisting of the petrified excrement of an animal", it was however, used more loosely to include all fossilised bone. The major part of the coprolite dug in the county came from the Cambridge Greensand at the bottom-most layer of the chalk where the chalk marl overlies the Gault clay.

Being extremely rich in phosphate it was exploited by Cambridgeshire landowners and others, many of whom made small fortunes during the period from 1860 to 1890. This was the forerunner of the fertiliser industry which exists today.

Excavated by manual labour, the excavations often went as deep as 12 feet (3.66 m.) or more, often with considerable loss of life due to inadequate shoring and other safety precautions.

There is still extensive evidence of these workings today and judging from the geographical incidence of workings, by 1880 almost every landowner along the relevant geological outcrop roughly over a line drawn from Soham to Royston must have been involved directly or indirectly with the coprolite mining rush.

This work is informative and is copiously illustrated with maps, contemporary photographs and facsimiles of documents. It should have considerable interest for members and is recommended.

Cecil Bourne.

NOTICE

The William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust Ltd., and the Chelsea Speleological Society are holding a Symposium on South-East England - 30th/31st September Oct. 1976 at the Institute of Geological Sciences, Exhibition Road, London S.W.7. 10.45 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. The programme includes:-

SATURDAY Harry Pearman - Underground Exploration in South-East England.
Paul W. Sowan - Hearthstone Mining; our Current State of Knowledge.
Rod LeGear - Chalk Mines and Deneholes
G. de G. Sieveking - Neolithic Flint Mines
Sylvia P. Beamon - Royston Cave, and a brief summary on the activities of Subterranea Britannica.
A speaker from the Kent Defence Research Group - Underground Fortresses.

SUNDAY Excursion 1: Essex Deneholes at Hangman's Wood.
Excursion 2: Godstone - hearthstone mines.

For booking form and further details apply: J. Wilmut, 80 de Beauvoir Road, Reading RG1 5NP. All bookings should be sent by October 4th.

